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ABSTRACT

This report measures how well Maryland educators are working together to provide a public education that meets the long- and short-term needs of homeless children and youth by providing environments that support their physical, social, and emotional growth. It outlines accomplishments for the 1990-91 school year, recommends ways of addressing issues in the 1990 McKinney Act Amendments (MAAs), provides a statewide profile of the numbers of homeless children and youth, summarizes barriers and special needs of homeless children, and provides data about the circumstances and needs of school-age children who live apart from their families with relatives and/or friends. Profiles of interviewed mothers describe the pain and stress that homeless children and their families face daily, and excerpts from children's letters reveal the children's feelings during this time of crisis. This report updates legislative requirements in the 1990 MAAs, explains school districts' obligations under Section 504 to identify and locate handicapped homeless children and youth, reviews Chapter 1 policy for the eligibility of homeless children, highlights the Mandatory Kindergarten Law's impact for homeless parents and their 5-year-old children, explains the School Health Services Standards' Physical Examination Requirement, and provides data about Exemplary Practices. Data are given in six figures and numerous tables. (RLC)

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Educating Homeless Children and Youth:

How Are We Measuring Up?

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A Progress Report
School Year 1990-91

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Educating Homeless Children and Youth

How Are We Measuring Up?

A Progress Report

School Year 1990-91

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Introduction

***DAISY**, 9, has lived in the Greentree Shelter, part of the Baptist Home for Children, for twelve months with her mother, brother, and sister. The shelter is in Montgomery County, Maryland, just outside of Washington, D.C. Her father is staying with relatives. Both parents came from Cuba, as part of the Mariel Boat lift.*

I don't know where I want to live--a safe place. Not D.C. At a lot of places in D.C. there are drugs, killings, shooting. I seen this on TV and sometimes I go past it.

[The shelter is] not bad and not good. Not bad is 'cause of the people. They take us fun places. Once they took us to King's Dominion and the zoo. What's very bad is the food. We have soup over and over.

There's a lot of fighting here. There's this boy, he moved, he was fighting with everyone. He had a fight with me. He almost had a fight with my sister. Very bad. The first day they moved, everyone was so happy.

Math is hard for me. Spelling is easy and hard. It's kind of easy because my teacher gives me easy words. 'Cause we are the purple group, the lower group. I like the red group 'cause they get better words. Like "happy." "Sad," that's a purple word. The red group gets compound words, like "something," "anything."

I'll never be in the BBQ group. I'll never pass that. BBQ is the hardest--dictionary, different, a lot of words--thirteen [letters] long.

I could tell everybody in the whole school [that I live in the shelter] and I don't really care, cause I'm not really different than them. I can still write, read, go to school, and learn. I'm not so different from them.

I get shy. Because when I was in third grade my teacher made me stand in front of the classroom telling where did I live, how did I feel there, all these questions.

Interview conducted by Karin Chenoweth, A freelance writer.

The education of homeless children, like Daisy, continues to be a challenge to educators, parents, providers, advocates, and our legislators. Because of the lack of low income housing and other issues such as unemployment, underemployment, domestic violence, divorce, child abuse, teen pregnancy, and substance abuse, thousands of Maryland's children have found themselves living in shelters, cars, abandoned buildings, campgrounds, and in many other temporary settings not suitable for regular human habitation. Many of our children who experienced homelessness this year lost more than their homes. Many lost their furniture, their pets, their toys and their playmates as they became uprooted in search of a permanent place to live.

This progress report measures how well we are working together to provide a public education that meets both the long- and short-term needs of our homeless children and youth by providing an environment that supports their physical, social, and emotional growth. It outlines

our accomplishments for school year 1990-91 and makes recommendations for addressing specific issues identified in the 1990 McKinney Act Amendments. The "Statistical Data, Barriers, and Special Needs" provides a statewide profile of the numbers of homeless children and youth and a summary of the existing barriers and special needs of our homeless children. However, the "Investigation of School-Aged Children Living With Relatives and/or Friends" provides information regarding the circumstances and needs of children who are living apart from their families with relatives and/or friends. The profiles of the mothers interviewed describe the pain and stress that homeless children and their families encounter on a daily basis and the "Excerpts from Children's Letters" reveal the children's feelings during this time of crisis. Further, this report provides an update on legislative requirements found in the 1990 McKinney Act Amendments, explains school districts' obligations under Section 504 to identify and locate homeless children and youth who are handicapped, reviews the Chapter I policy for the eligibility of homeless children, highlights the impact of the Mandatory Kindergarten Law for homeless parents and their five year olds, and explains the School Health Services Standards' Physical Examination Requirement. Finally, this progress report provides information about Exemplary Practices such as school-based initiatives that were planned and implemented by students to help homeless children in their communities and other local initiatives that help to meet the specific needs of homeless children and to heighten the awareness of what it means to be homeless.

Measuring Our Progress

Accomplishments

This school year, we have been very successful in heightening the awareness of educators, parents, providers, advocates, community leaders, and even our students to the needs of Maryland's homeless children and youth. The identification of school contacts helped to ensure the immediate enrollment of our homeless students, and the established partnerships between schools and shelters helped us provide services to homeless students beyond the normal classroom setting. The following are our accomplishments for the 1990-91 school year:

- Maintained a tracking system for homeless children in Maryland to provide accurate unduplicated statistical data.

- Conducted on-site visits to feeder elementary schools and shelters in Allegany, Carroll, Frederick, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester counties.

- Provided technical assistance to schools by conducting 7 staff awareness sessions.

- Provided technical assistance to local task force and advisory committees for the education of homeless children and youth.

- Planned and implemented the Second Annual Conference for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (May 13, 1991, Towson Sheraton).

- Planned and implemented a student-centered conference that heightened the awareness of two hundred student leaders from feeder schools in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's and Baltimore counties (January 19, 1991, Holiday Inn-BWI).

- Identified exemplary student-planned and implemented initiatives that meet the special needs of our homeless students.
  - Students Helping Students Outreach Video
  - Famous Favorites Cookbook
  - Helping Hands for the Homeless
  - The Corner House Project
  - School Supplies for Homeless Children
  - Have A Heart--Help the Homeless
  - Sweets for Our Sweeties
  - We Make SMILES
  - Helping Hearts and Hands
  - Malcolm the Jug
  - Dr. King's Learning Center
  - Books for Others

- Kids Making a Difference for Kids
- Sensational Sam Students: Caring and Sharing
- Easter Hunt and Party

o Collected and disseminated information about Maryland's homeless children and youth through the following publications and studies:
  - Annual Progress Report, School Year 1990-91
  - Case Studies of Children Living with Relatives and/or Friends
  - Parent Brochure
  - School Attendance Flier

o Shared information about Maryland's Homeless Children and Youth by making presentations at the following meetings and conferences:
  - American Friends Service Committee Inservice Training for Teachers
  - Prince George's County Supervisor's Meeting
  - Statewide Child Find Meeting
  - Statewide Chapter I Parent Conference
  - Statewide Health and Legal Issues Conference
  - National Chapter I Conference
  - National Children's Defense Fund Conference
  - Mid-Atlantic Network of Youth and Family Services Conference
  - Coalition for Daycare and Family Support Services Conference
  - Action for the Homeless Conference
  - Second Annual At Risk Conference
  - Focus 44 Talk Show
  - University of Maryland Baltimore County (class presentation)
  - Baltimore City's Annual Chapter I Conference
  - Baltimore City's Parent Liaison's Staff Training
  - Maryland Informational and Referral Providers Conference
  - School and Christian Mission Conference
  - Arkansas State Conference on Educating Homeless Children and Youth

The McKinney Act Amendments of 1990 requires that we do more than give homeless children access to our schools. We are also required to identify and address their special needs. In an effort to adhere to the mandates of the statute and to ensure that Maryland's homeless students experience success in school, we make the following recommendations:

Recommendations

- Continue to establish school-based intervention partnerships that help meet the needs of homeless students.

- Continue to review and revise any laws, regulations, practices or policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment, attendance, or success of homeless children and youth in school.

- Continue to provide parental involvement outreach activities for homeless parents living in transitional and emergency shelters and motels.

- Target homeless students for before-and after-school tutorial and homework assistance programs and provide transportation if needed.

- Disseminate information to shelter providers about the location and eligibility criteria of local food programs (i.e., breakfast program) and important dates (i.e. school closings, testing dates).

- Continue to provide awareness training for school personnel on the needs and rights of homeless children and youth.

- Identify a homeless liaison in each of the twenty-four school districts to coordinate all the activities related to the education of homeless children and youth in that district.

- Provide transportation for homeless children returning to their "home" schools (school the child attended prior to becoming homeless).

- Continue to identify and accurately complete tracking forms for all homeless children.

Maryland's Homeless Children and Youth

Excerpts from Children's Letters

Children residing in emergency and transitional shelters throughout Maryland were asked to write a letter addressed to anyone of their choice. No limitations were given for the length or the topics to be discussed in the letters. The following are excerpts from the children's letters.

Dear God,

I'm tired, lonely, and afraid. My little sister cries because she's hungry and my mother cries because we're here. I'm being a big girl. I'm not going to let anyone see me cry. Please help us.

Thomasia
Age: 11

Dear Miss Amy,

Thank you for keeping my secret.

Lucas
Age: 9

Dear Mommy,

Don't be sad. Maybe we will find a new house tomorrow.

Timothy
Age: 9

Dear Bridgette,

Goodbye. I hope you find another friend. Say goodbye to the others for me. Don't write.

Stacey
Age: 11

Dear God,

I'm sorry I complained about our apartment. It was really all right. If you give us another one, I promise I'll keep my room clean.

Taiseer
Age: 13

Dear Tracie,

The shelter is not bad. Do you like it where you live? Have you seen daddy?

Dannielle
Age: 7

Dear Shelter Ladies,

My birthday is next week. I hope somebody remembers.

Sharon
Age: 7

Dear _____,

I wish I could just disappear!

Asha
Age: 12

Dear Mrs. Peggy,

I don't understand everything that is happening to us or why we are living here. School will be opening soon and for the first time I'm afraid.

Paulette
Age: 14

Dear Mama,

Some dreams are good and some dreams can be very bad. Last night, I dreamed that we were in a big white house with lots of windows. My room was pink and white. That's my favorite color. I had lots of friends and they even came to visit me. You were in the kitchen cooking something good. I didn't want to wake up from my dream. Everything was so peaceful and nice. When I opened my eyes, I looked for you. You were there as you promised but we were still in the shelter. I don't know how to wake up from this dream.

Sonya
Age: 13

Maryland's Homeless Children and Youth

An Investigation of School Aged Children Living With Relatives and/or Friends

Introduction

Formal and informal interviews with homeless parents and shelter providers have revealed that many homeless families are living doubled up with relatives and friends. In addition, inadequate supervision and the lack of separate rooms for intact families and families with adolescent male children force emergency shelter providers to rule that homeless children over the age of twelve, particularly males, and the male spouse cannot reside at the shelter. Very often, the children in these families do not attend school or they attend school irregularly and their numbers and locations are difficult to document because they live temporarily with a relative or friend. In addition, the mother, for fear of losing the financial assistance for the adolescent child living apart from the family, is reluctant to discuss the child or details about the child's temporary living arrangement. These families, sometimes called our hidden homeless, usually fall between the cracks and they lack the resources afforded homeless families living in emergency and transitional shelters.

This report presents results of an investigation conducted by the Maryland State Department of Education. The study was intended to provide information regarding the circumstances and needs of children and their families who are living apart. The profiles of six homeless women that participated in the interviews will give you an understanding of the impact of homelessness on homeless families and their school aged children who are forced to live with relatives and friends.

Inez

Inez is a 29-year-old single mother of four who had been living in the present shelter with her youngest child for a month. She had lived previously in a vacant house with all four children for two months. An increase in rent had forced them out of their last apartment. She was originally separated from the three oldest children because the shelter only had room for one. When additional space became available in the shelter, she decided that it was more desirable not to disrupt the children's education. Therefore, her two boys, fourteen and four, were living with her mother, and her daughter, age twelve, was living with another grandmother.

Inez was distressed about the family's separation and felt that it was very important for the children to be together. She also felt that her daughter's grandmother was trying to influence the child against her and that she was unfairly kept from seeing or speaking with her daughter. Inez was also concerned about her oldest son and felt that he didn't have any positive male role models or healthy social situations in which to participate. She asked if after-school activities could provide either of the above, and regretted that the separation caused her to be out of touch with her children's circumstances.

Mary

Mary is a 34-year-old mother of three children who came to the present shelter three months earlier from an apartment she shared with her second husband. She is now separated. According to Mary, her husband had been abusive and unemployed, and had stolen money she had given him to pay the rent for their apartment as well as money she had saved to move out. Mary and her three children were evicted, and Mary was having a difficult time finding an apartment she could afford.

Mary had brought her youngest child with her to the shelter, and had left her fourteen year-old son and sixteen-year-old daughter in the care of their father (her first husband), who agreed to keep them until Mary was in a more stable situation. Both children missed several days of school in the transition, and her daughter had lost a significant amount because of emotional problems associated with the breakup of her mother's second marriage. According to Mary, her daughter had repeated the fourth grade due to extended absences from school and the emotional stress of separation.

The striking feature about Mary was her high self-esteem and optimism in the face of her predicament. Mary was intelligent and well-spoken and had managed to maintain her job the entire time she had been homeless. According to Mary, she had been in a stable situation all her life until she came to this shelter. She seemed to feel more in control of her circumstances and didn't appear as resigned or depressed as many others in the same situation.

However, Mary was beginning to get worried about her situation and was very concerned about the disruption to her children's lives. Because the older children were now living a good distance away, she didn't get to see them as much as she wanted. While she was comfortable with their living situation, she was unhappy about the family being separated and about the disruption of the children's education. She believed that both children were anxious about the circumstances of their mother and brother from whom they were separated, as well as their own future.

Mary was particularly worried about her daughter, whom she believed was emotionally vulnerable and for whom she thought the separation was particularly difficult. While she believed the separation had initially been a wise move, she now felt its unexpected duration was making it an unhealthy situation.

Katherine

Katherine is a 31-year-old separated mother of four who had been living with her two younger children in the present shelter for one month. Before coming to the shelter, she and her four children had been living doubled-up with relatives for two months after an increase in rent had forced them to leave their apartment.

Katherine had left her 14-year-old daughter and ten-year-old son living with their paternal grandmother because she felt they were old enough to get to school on their own and would not have to change schools. She felt it was the best way to minimize the disruption caused by their homelessness. She also believed that having an infant child severely limited her ability to care for the older children in her present circumstances and that her lack of mobility would cause problems if she was responsible for getting them to school.

While Katherine was, for the most part, comfortable with her older children's living situation, she was distressed about the separation. She felt that they were lonely and was worried about the fact that they often had to be alone in the house where they were staying. She felt that they needed supervision and they needed their mother around. She was also concerned about her ten-year-old son who had been held back in school because of his dyslexia. She felt frustrated by the fact that while he was supposed to be getting extra help in school, she would not easily oversee his progress or be his advocate. Because of the separation, she was unable to see them as often as she wished. Katherine needed counselling to help her deal with the separation, and she remarked that perhaps counseling would benefit her children too but that meant notifying the schools and she wasn't ready to do that.

Nessa

Nessa is a 33-year-old divorced mother of three daughters, ages seventeen, eleven, and four, who has been homeless for four months. She had become homeless when she lost her job and could no longer pay her rent. She was very depressed and wept throughout the interview. She was also feeling very hopeless.

None of Nessa's daughters were currently with her because she had not wanted to drag them into the shelter environment and disrupt their education and their lives. However, she thought she would have a job and an apartment by this time, and she was feeling very guilty and ashamed that she was letting her children down. She also missed them a lot.

Nessa's troubles were compounded by the fact that she found it necessary to leave her daughters in three different places. She was not happy with any of the situations because she felt like none of them were getting enough emotional support at a time when they needed it. She was particularly unhappy about her oldest daughter's situation. When she became homeless, the child was sent to live with her aunt. However, Nessa quickly learned that her daughter was not getting any supervision because that aunt worked. She then moved her daughter to her mother's home, which was in a less desirable neighborhood but had the advantage of her mother being home during the day. The major problem was that Nessa's mother is an alcoholic, and Nessa knew what it was like to be cared for by an alcoholic. She felt like her seventeen-year-old was at great risk already and that no desirable option really existed for her care.

The 11-year-old was staying with another aunt, and Nessa believed she was being teased about her situation by her cousins. She had to miss two weeks of school because her mother was ill and unable to get the required transfer papers together for her enrollment in the new school.

Nessa felt that all the girls were lonely and unhappy but were trying to hide it from her so she wouldn't be more upset than she was. The saddest fact was that Nessa felt like such a failure that she stopped contacting her children regularly. She felt like they would ask when they could be together, and she would have to disappoint them again. She wanted very much for them to all be reunited but felt hopeless about it ever happening. After all, they had been homeless for nearly half a year.

Ursula

Ursula is an intense, petite, 26-year-old divorced mother of two boys who had been living in the present shelter for eighteen months. Before coming to the shelter, she had lived in

another shelter for one month and had shared an apartment with her sister until they had a conflict and Ursula was asked to leave.

Ursula lived with her 3-year-old son and was separated from her seven year-old son because her ex-husband hadn't wanted him to live in a shelter. Ursula thought he'd be better off living with his father because he could stay in the same school. She didn't have enough money to transport him to his home school, had he lived with her.

Ursula was unhappy with the separation and she believed that her seven year old child was suffering. According to Ursula, her son was experiencing problems with school work that she felt were the result of his poor emotional state due to their separation. She believed that the child was feeling abandoned and was jealous that his brother lived with his mother and he could not. She said that even though he spent every weekend with them at the shelter, when it was time to part, he became inconsolably upset. She was very eager to get into permanent housing so that they could be reunited. However, she had no idea how long this would take. In the meantime, Ursula's son was acting out in school-- something he had never done before.

Ursula's eyes glistened when she spoke of her son, and she appeared to be very proud of him and very concerned for his welfare. When the interview was completed, she insisted on showing me several pictures of him, including a large photograph of him in his cap and gown from his kindergarten graduation.

Ruth

Ruth is a 33-year-old single mother of six children who had been homeless for fifteen months when she came to the transitional shelter. Her manner was brief and businesslike, but she was open about her situation.

Ruth had been living in this shelter for nineteen months and had a set of 1-year-old twins living in the apartment with her. Her homelessness had been the result of her alcoholism, and her three oldest children had been taken away from her by the courts because of child abuse. Since coming to the shelter she had been working very hard on her recovery and was very proud of her success. However, she was aware of her vulnerability, and she was not overconfident.

Ruth's 5-year-old daughter was in her custody but had been sent to live with the child's paternal grandmother at the beginning of the school year. Ruth felt that it would have been very difficult for her to transport the child to and from half-day kindergarten with twin babies, and she wanted very much for the child to attend school.

Ruth was frustrated by the fact that after making that decision, she had learned that the child's grandmother, being very old, was often too sick or tired to get the child to school. As a result, she had missed a great deal of kindergarten. Ruth was very agitated over her lack of control of her daughter's circumstances and was very anxious to get into permanent housing so that she could get her daughter back and register her for school in September. She was also frustrated by the fact that it was difficult for her to have any input in her daughter's school experience and maintain any meaningful contact with the school. Ruth's present circumstance and the physical distance created by the separation was taking its toll on both Ruth and her child.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gather information about the school-aged children of homeless parents living in the state of Maryland. The focus of the research is school-aged children who are separated from their homeless parents for reasons other than adoption or foster care. This includes children who have been left, informally, in the care of relatives or friends, as well as those whose custodial mothers have voluntarily and formally placed them in temporary custody of another caretaker.

The investigation was not intended to involve a large random or representative sample of the population of doubled-up families; rather its purpose was to gather a large amount of information from a small number of families in a variety of differing circumstances. It was originally proposed that 100 mothers would be included in the study, but difficulties in recruitment of participants resulted in a sample of 27 mothers who are separated from their children. An attempt was made to collect information about the circumstances of these mothers and the school-aged children from whom they are separated. Included are questions designed to ascertain the educational status of these children: are they in school and if not what are the barriers associated with the access to education? The information gathered from this study will document the barriers that may deny homeless children living with relatives and friends access to Maryland's schools and to make recommendations, if necessary, for the revision of local policies and procedures and/or state laws and the implementation of intervention strategies for identifying and addressing the needs of these children.

Methodology

Information was obtained through personal interviews by the researcher with homeless women in Maryland shelters who had or recently had one or more school-aged children from whom they were separated and who were living in situations described above. Originally, on-site visits were to be made to 18 Family Shelters in Maryland in the five counties that reported the largest number of homeless children in the 1989-90 school year. When the goal to locate and interview 100 women meeting the above criteria fell far short of the expected level, the researcher extended the study to include women living in Women's Shelters. Many of these women voluntarily leave their children with relatives or friends because they don't want to expose the children to living in a shelter or the family shelters were full and only space at a women's shelter was available.

In the first part of the study involving family shelters, shelters were chosen and shelter directors were notified about the study through a memo from the State Coordinator of Education for Homeless Children and Youth in Maryland. The state coordinator also informed the shelter directors that a monetary incentive of $10 would be paid to the women participating in the study. In addition to the state coordinator's correspondence to the shelter directors, the researcher made a follow-up telephone call and mailing to the shelter directors to establish a rapport and to explain the purpose of the research and to ask for assistance in identifying potential subjects. Fliers describing the project were disseminated to each shelter identified for participation. Personal and telephone contacts with the shelter staff were initiated by the researcher prior to visiting the shelters to conduct the interviews.

Although there was a genuine interest in the project, very few potential subjects were identified initially. The researcher had to make several follow-up calls and visits to the shelters to find subjects that met the criteria for the study. Our experience in trying to recruit subjects confirms the difficulties in counting and studying the "hidden homeless" experienced by others and suggests that these families are not generally motivated to participate in research studies. They may choose to participate if contacted directly but they are reluctant to initiate the first contact. For many of the subjects, the appointment was made by direct telephone contact with the subject by the researcher.

Upon arrival at the shelter at the designated time and date, the researcher identified herself to the shelter staff with whom telephone contact had been made and requested a quiet and private location to conduct the interviews. Then the participants were notified that the researcher had arrived.

Following introductions, the researcher read a prepared statement to each subject describing the purpose of the study, ensuring confidentiality, and informing them of their rights during the interview. After the researcher answered any questions and was certain that the subject understood, a consent form was read and the subject was asked to sign and date the form.

Realizing that many homeless individuals are not amenable to situations that require them to complete paperwork and forms, the questionnaire was then read to the subject, and the subject was encouraged to answer the questions in as much depth as possible. The questionnaire was composed of three sections: the first part consisted of questions designed to obtain information about demographics and the subject's history of homelessness; the second part asked questions about the subject's children including living arrangements, educational history, and current school attendance; and the third part contained questions related to the effects of the separation on the mother and child(ren). While many of the questions required brief and specific responses, many were open-ended and gave the women the opportunity to speak freely about themselves, their children, and their situation.

At the conclusion of the interview, each woman was acknowledged for her participation. The researcher also attempted to locate the contact staff person, thank him/her for cooperating, and let them know that the researcher would maintain contact to find out if there were additional subjects for the study.

The methodology for the second part of the study, which involved women in Women's Shelters, varied slightly from the above. In this situation, mostly for expedience, the first contact was made by phone to the shelter director by the researcher. The study was briefly explained, and if any interest and a willingness to participate was expressed by the director, a follow-up letter was sent immediately, as well as a notice that could be circulated to the women in the shelter explaining the study, and the criteria for participation. Approximately one week later, the shelter director was contacted again by phone, by the researcher, to learn if any prospective subjects had been identified. At this point, the methodology became identical to the one followed for the first group.

Findings of the Study

The findings of this study are based on a sample of 27 mothers, all of whom where either homeless at the time of the interview or had recently been homeless. Twenty of these subjects either were or had recently been residents in family shelters, and all but one were or had recently been separated from one or more of their school-aged children for reasons other than adoption or foster care. A decision was made to include that subject because even though her children had been in foster care in the past, since regaining custody of them she had been through a period of homelessness, and had experienced what were thought to be significant barriers trying to keep her children in school. The other seven subjects in the sample were homeless women who were residing in Women's Shelters and were separated from one or more of their school-aged children for reasons other than adoption or foster care. All interviews were conducted between March 9, 1991 and June 13, 1991.

Part I: Demographics and History of Homelessness

The cultural background of the sample included 79.6%(21) African Americans, 14.6%(4) Caucasians, and 5.6%(1) subjects of other backgrounds. The women ranged in age from 22 to 40 years, with the mean age being 31.1 years. Marital status of the sample included 3.7%(1) married women, 44.4%(12) single women, 22.2%(6) divorced women, and 29.6%(8) separated women. The sample of women had a total of 76 children ages eighteen and under. Of those 76, 44 (or 57.9%) of the children were eighteen and under and were living apart from them in situations other than adoption or foster care. That represents a mean of 2.8 children, ages eighteen and under, per woman, and a mean of 1.7 children per woman in the same age group from whom they were separated.

Subjects had spent anywhere from three days to 19 months at the shelter at which they were interviewed, and the mean amount of time spent was 3.8 months. In response to the question "How long were you homeless before you came to this shelter?," subjects responded anywhere from one night to 15 months, with a mean of 4.1 months.

The question "Describe your living arrangements before you came here?" elicited the following responses:

Living with parent(s)	**19.1%(5.2)**
Living with other relatives	**14.8%(4.0)**
Living with friends	**27.8%(7.5)**
Living with mate	**9.3%(2.5)**
Shelter, crisis center, hotel	**14.8%(4.0)**
Incarcerated	**6.8%(6.8)**
Other (street, car, vacant building)	**7.4%(2.0)**

To the question "What was the one main reason for your current period of homelessness?", subjects responded:

Economic	**31.5%(8.5)**
Relationship	**33.3%(9.0)**

Substance Abuse	**20.4%(5.5)**
Other	**14.8%(4.0)**

In answer to the question, "Have you had any other periods of homelessness in the past five years?", 66.6% of the subjects responded "no" and 33.3% responded "yes".

Part II - Background and Educational History of Children

The first question asked was, "What is the age and sex of each child, 18 and under, living apart from you?" The number of children in this category totalled 44; 52.3%(23) were boys and 47.7%(21) were girls. In the pre-school group, ages 1-4, there were eight children, or 18.2% of the total. Eighteen elementary school children, ages 5-11, represented 40.9% of the total, as did the group of 18 youth, 12-18 years old (40.9%).

Reasons the above children were separated from their mothers were grouped into seven categories, which follow with subjects' responses:

To remain in a stable school and/or home environment	**46.5%(20)**
Couldn't adjust to living in shelter	**2.3%(1)**
Conflict with mother	**9.3%(4)**
No room at shelter or shelter unable to take	**14.0%(6)**
Child(ren)s father was willing to take until mother was more stable	**11.6%(5)**
Mother has significant problem with drugs	**14.0(6)**
Uncontrollable teenager/placed in group home when mother became homeless	**2.3%**

In answer to the question "How long have you been separated from each child during this period of homelessness?", subjects responded anywhere from four days to 18 months, with a mean of 4.2 months. Several women responded that they had been separated for longer than the current period of homelessness. If total time separated, including the current period of homelessness, is calculated, the mean is increased to 6.7 months with the range becoming four days to 60 months.

The response to "who are they [the children] currently living with?" was the following:

Father		22.1%(9.5)
Grandparent(s)		50.0%(21.5)
Grandmother & Grandfather	2.0	
Grandmother only	19.5	
Other relatives (only aunts)		14.0%(6.0)
Friends		11.7%(5.0)
Other (group home)		2.3%(1.0)

The response to "How long has/have your child(ren) lived with the above since your current separation?" was the same as to the question "what is total time separated from your child(ren) including the current period of homelessness?". Therefore, the range is four days to 60 months, and the mean is 6.7 months. In answer to the next question "how many other places has/have your child(ren) lived since your current separation?", only one subject responded that her child had lived in more than one place, and she said it was for a brief enough period as to be negligible. The reason given by the mother was that her child didn't have enough supervision.

In response to the question "Are you comfortable with your child(ren)'s present living arrangements?", 55.8%(24) reported "yes," 25.6%(11) reported "yes & no," and 18.6%(8) reported "no." All (11) of the "yes & no's" and three of the "no's" qualified their answers with the remark, "I am comfortable with the living arrangement but not the separation!"

Of the 46 children eighteen and under, five were under five years of age and not yet enrolled in school. Of the 41 remaining, three children under five years were attending preschool or Headstart, 37 were enrolled in elementary or high school, and only one, a sixteen year-old, was currently not attending school. Of the 40 enrolled in school, 72.5%(29) had attended one school during the 1990-91 school year, and 27.5%(11) had attended more than one school. Of those 11, eight had attended two schools, and three had attended three schools.

In response to the question that asked "Do you know the name of the school your child(ren) is/are attending?", the twenty-seven subjects identified 36 (or 90%) of the schools, and did not know the names of 10%(4) of the schools.

"How much school has/have your child(ren) missed?" elicited the following:

None	**17.5%(7)**
Few days	**42.5%(17)**
Five days	**17.5%(7)**
Seven days	**2.5%(1)**
Ten days	**10.0(4)**
Twenty days	**2.0%(2)**
A lot	**2.0%(2)**

Of the 40 children being reported, 77.5%(31) were absent from school five days or less. For the 24 children who missed a few to five days, the reasons below were given:

Normal illness	**77.1%(18.5)**
Transportation problems	**12.5%(3.0)**
Trouble with registration	**4.2%(1.0)**
In hospital giving birth	**4.4%(1.0)**
Time lost in move	**2.1%(0.5)**

Of the nine children reported to be absent from school more than five days, the seven day absence was due to flu and another illness; the four 10 day absences were due to: 1) mother being too ill to register child; 2) a disciplinary removal; 3) and 4) children changing schools: the two 20 day absences were due to 1) emotional problems and 2) emotional problems and asthma; and finally, the two "a lots" were caused by 1) bad behavior and truancy and 2) a grandmother being too old and often ill to transport child to school.

In response to "has your child ever repeated a grade?", forty subjects responded of their school-aged children:

Not applicable, 5 yrs. or under		**20%(8)**
No		**60%(24)**
Yes		**20%(8)**
Performed below grade level	**4**	
Emotional problems	**2**	
Dyslexia	**1**	
Wasn't sure	**1**	

Calculated for the 32 students for whom it was applicable, 24 out of 32, (or 75%) of the school-aged children had not repeated a grade.

Subjects were asked "of the special educational services listed below, please tell me if your child(ren) need(s) any that you know of?" Of the 27 subjects questioned, five or 18.5% said none of their children needed any: 16 (or 59.3%) said all of their children needed some services, and six, (or 22.2%) said some but not all of their children needed services. Of the 22 subjects who thought their children needed services, 63 special educational services were named for 29 children. They were:

Tutoring programs for reading and/or math	4
Special education for the handicapped	1
Programs for the gifted and talented	10
Services in the English language	4
Job training	7
Counseling for personal problems	20
Programs addressing drugs and alcohol	17

Part III--Effects of Separation

Part III of the questionnaire dealt with the effects of the separation on parents and children. The first question asked, "Are you able to keep in contact with your child(ren)?" One of the 27 subjects was not applicable. Of the 26 remaining, all had in-person contact with their children. Only one mother said she had to write to one of her children because of lack of access. The frequency of contact was:

By Phone		
Everyday	12	48%
Few times/week	10	40%
One time/week	2	8%
One time/month	1	4%
TOTAL	25	

In Person		
Everyday	6	23.1%
Few times/week	4	15.4%
One time/week	10	38.5%
Two times/month	4	15.4%
Infrequently	2	7.7%
TOTAL	26	

The question "Do you think your child(ren)'s needs are being met in their current living arrangement?" brought the following responses:

Yes	**65.1%(28)**
Yes & no	**14.0% (6)**
No	**34.6% (9)**

Five of those who answered "yes & no" and six of those who answered "no" stated that their child(ren) needed to be with their mothers and/or their families, and one of the "no's" was afraid her child's grandmother was trying to turn the child against her. The other "yes & no" said her child was missing too much school, although all other needs were being met. The other three "no's" said their child(ren) was/were not getting enough nurturing or companionship.

In answer to the question "What are the major problems your children are experiencing as a result of their separation from you?", five, (or 19.2%) said there were none, and 21, (or 80.8%) named the following:

Missing mother and family	22
Depressed, lonely, and/or feeling abandoned	7
Lacking trust in mother	2
Lacking regular access to school	1
Overweight and no social life	1
Behavioral problems	1
Won't confide in grandmother	1

In answer to the final question, "What are your plans for the future concerning the children from whom you are separated?", all but two of the 27 subjects responded (two subjects are reunited with their children). Of the 25, four (16%) did not cite being reunited with their child(ren) as a priority. These were the responses:

Get apartment and get children back	40%(10)
Get job, apartment and children back	20% (5)
Get straight, apartment & children back	8% (2)
Get straight, job, and children back	4% (1)
Get in transitional housing for a year, get GED, then get one child at a time	4% (1)
Get child into shelter with her ASAP	4% (1)
Get child back when they are both ready	4% (1)
Deal with addiction, then see	8% (2)
Keep children in private school, whatever it takes	4% (1)
Doesn't want daughter, wishes her well	4% (1)

Conclusion

Even though stability of the school situation reported in this research is a positive sign, it is clear that most of the subjects recognize the reality that keeping their families intact and keeping their children in school are not mutually compatible options. Homeless mothers entering the shelter system, aware of the disruption to family life and eager to keep some aspect of their child(ren)'s lives stable, find that separation is the least objectionable of choices. It is a failure on the part of the educational system that a uniform solution for transporting homeless children to a home school, if that is what a parent deems is in his or her best interest, has not been found. Parents' lack of accessibility to their child(ren)'s school when they are separated, so that they may serve as advocates for these children who are already at risk, is another problem created by this situation. The intermittent contact created by the separation makes it very difficult for mothers to stay on top of their child(ren)'s educational progress and any problems they may be experiencing.

While the researcher was unable to locate any school-aged children of homeless parents not attending school, it was evident from anecdotal conversations with shelter staff and other service providers that they, too, believe that many of these children, particularly the older ones, are not attending school. The issues of homeless teenagers and education are made more complex by the higher incidence of truancy problems, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and academic failure, coupled with the fact that teenagers are more sensitive to what others think of them than younger children. If these youth can not be accessed through shelters, it becomes increasingly important to discover a mechanism to locate them and any school-aged children not regularly attending school. If they are among the ranks of doubled-up families, as seems possible, many of them may show up intermittently at a school. Even though educators may be inclined to protect the privacy of children in these families, it seems that this may be the only point of contact. Schools and educators can reach parents in doubled-up situations, even if they do not yet consider themselves homeless, to inform them of their child(ren)'s educational rights and to teach them the best ways to advocate for their children.

Implications for Educators

The impact of homelessness on a child's emotional, physical, and educational development is severe, regardless of whether the child lives in a shelter or is separated from the family and living with relatives or friends. As indicated in the study, the temporary living arrangements for the children who cannot stay with the family because of age limitations at the shelter or the parent's unwillingness to expose the children to shelter life answers one problem but creates other problems. Schools must recognize and understand the emotional, behavior, and social problems created by the separation of children from the family. Then they must develop and implement programs and practices to help alleviate these problems. A major concern is those children who live with relatives and friends and do not attend school. In many cases, the family member or friend is not the legal guardian or the school is not notified that transportation is needed for fear that the child will be forced to transfer to another school. How do we ensure that these children are provided with needed services and information regarding their rights? How do we provide information to a "hidden" population of children who may be at risk?

Some recommendations are:

1. Send notices to all parents from school and day care programs, via the children, explaining the educational rights of homeless children.

2. Place notices about educational rights for homeless children in community centers and public places, such as grocery stores, WIC offices, welfare offices, health centers, soup kitchens, and fuel and housing assistance agencies.

3. Provide school inservice training and other educational forums that address the issues of children who live in doubled up homeless situations and children who live with relatives and friends while the family lives in a shelter.

Maryland's Homeless Children and Youth

Statistical Data, Barriers, and Special Needs

According to the statistical data reported by the Departments of Social Services, local school districts, Community Action Agencies, and emergency and transitional shelter providers, 6,956 children were homeless during the 1990-91 school year. Of that number, 4,029 homeless children were of school-age(6-16yrs.)

The development and implementation of Local Policies and Procedures for the Registration, Transfer, and Withdrawal of a Homeless Student have been most effective in ensuring the immediate enrollment of Maryland's homeless students. Last school year, 591 of the school-aged homeless students were reported as not attending school. This is a five percent decrease from the reported total during the 1989-90 school year. Most of the students, living in youth shelters or motels for 1-2 weeks, reported the lack of transportation back to the home school as the primary reason for their non-attendance in school. Most school systems are either providing transportation back to the home school on a case-by-case basis or not at all. Baltimore City Public Schools, however, transports all homeless students back to the home school. In jurisdictions where motel placements are two weeks or less, school personnel may not be aware of the hundreds of school-age homeless children in their districts. Homeless parents or youth shelter directors do not see the need to transfer the children to the nearby school for a one or two week stay. In the best interest of the child, other options must be considered for addressing the educational needs of these children.

Various studies have documented that homeless children between the ages of five and thirteen change schools frequently, attend school erratically, and receive poor grades. The distribution of school supplies and the implementation of tutorial and homework assistance programs have addressed some of the special needs of our homeless children. In addition, local school initiatives with feeder shelters have provided reading books and educational games, monthly cultural enrichment activities, food and clothing drives, and other projects that address specific needs of homeless children and their families. However, identifying and providing special education services for homeless children who may be in need is still an obstacle. Multiple moves, teachers' lack of awareness of homelessness, parental difficulty advocating, complicated referral process for assessment and treatment, and the unavailability or inaccessibility of programs for children with special learning needs are barriers to meeting this educational need of homeless school-age children.

In addition to the educational needs, the nutritional and health care needs of homeless children need to be addressed. Homeless parents and shelter providers should be informed about free and reduced breakfast and lunch programs at local schools and the process for a child's immediate access. The school nurse can be helpful in identifying health care needs and community resources.

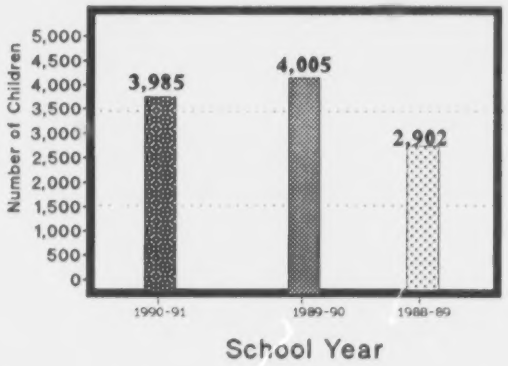
Homeless Children in Maryland

City/County	Total Number of Homeless Children			Total Number of School-Age Children (6-16)		
	SY'90-91	SY'89-90	SY'88-89	SY'90-91	SY'89-90	SY'88-89
Baltimore City	2,194	2,051	2,095	1,212	1,061	1,381
Montgomery	852	1,170	761	383	503	398
Prince George's	961	850	1,410	510	482	801
Baltimore County	705	696	485	395	376	282
Anne Arundel	425	383	236	191	159	110
Charles	168	353	102	72	131	53
Washington	215	346	253	99	117	107
Howard	128	227	144	51	101	92
Cecil	276	221	72	151	97	71
Frederick	296	183	174	108	74	117
Worcester	141	154	57	61	70	22
Carroll	116	124	173	54	55	85
Allegany	128	117	124	58	59	68
Wicomico	148	104	54	73	61	37
St. Mary's	42	80	99	22	38	49
Talbot	19	29	26	18	24	15
Caroline	27	19	54	21	13	30
Dorchester	6	8	16	4	8	16
Calvert	6	7	14	3	6	10
Kent	0	4	4	0	2	1
Harford	91	2	43	38	2	24
Somerset	12	1	1	4	0	1
Queen Anne's	0	0	41	0	0	29
Garrett	0	0	0	0	0	1
Kindergarten				501	487	
Total	6,956	7,129	6,439	4,029	3,926	3,795

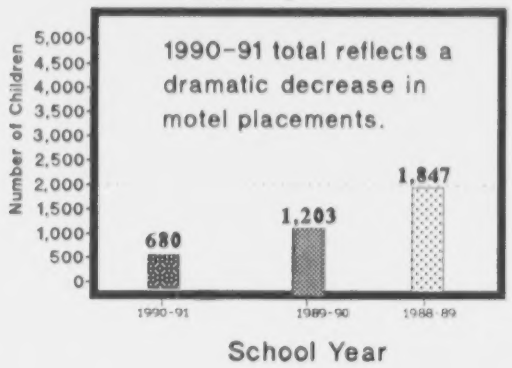
The following facts explain why this data reflects an unduplicated count that is slightly lower than last year's count: (1) the cost for bed nights has increased, and in several counties the Department of Social Services has either eliminated placing families in motels or decreased the number of motel placements; (2) families with children are remaining in the state of homelessness for a longer period of time, and (3) the statistics are based on services provided to homeless families; therefore the numbers do not reflect the increasing numbers of families with children that have been turned away.

Housing For Maryland's Homeless Children

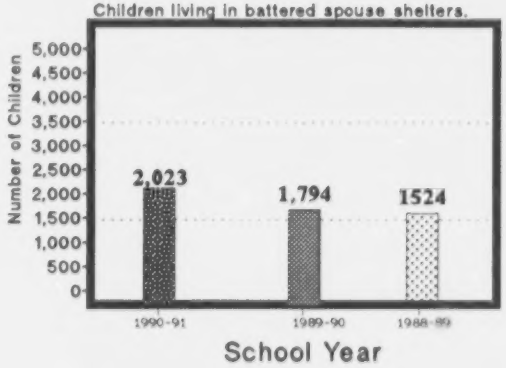
Children living in emergency and transitional shelters.



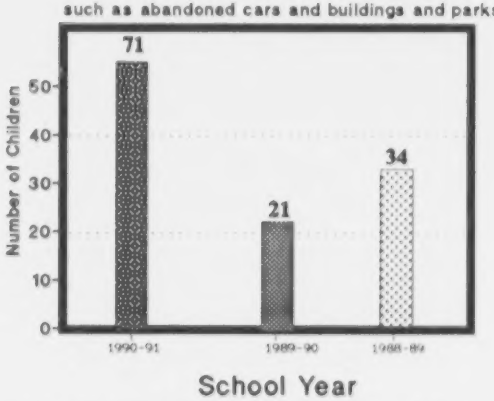
Children living in motels/hotels



Children living in battered spouse shelters.



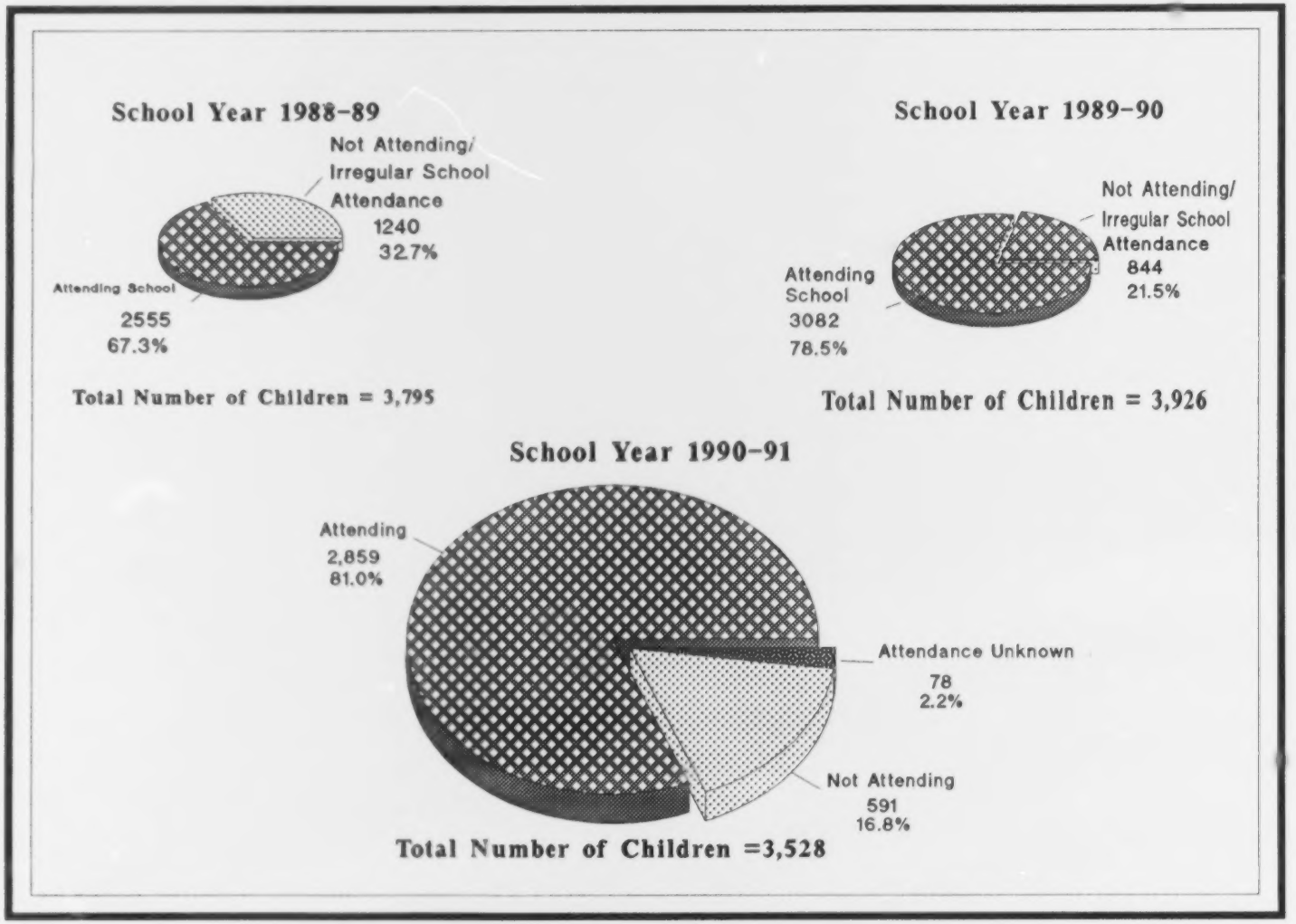
Children living in other living accomodations such as abandoned cars and buildings and parks.



Many of Maryland's emergency shelters cannot accomodate adolescent children over the age of twelve years; consequently, these children live with relatives and friends, and it is very difficult to locate and count them.

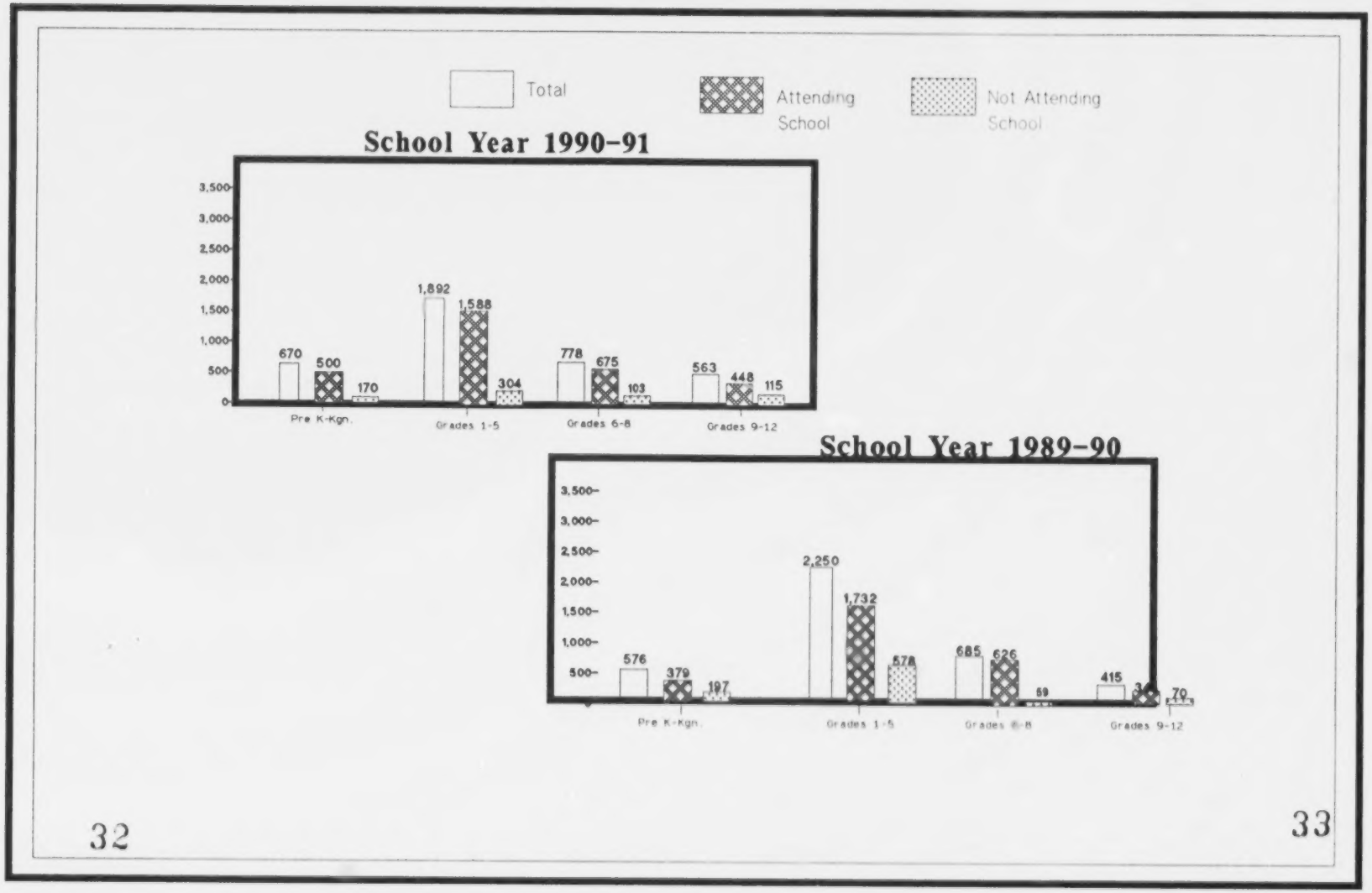
Homeless School-Age Children in Maryland

School Attendance

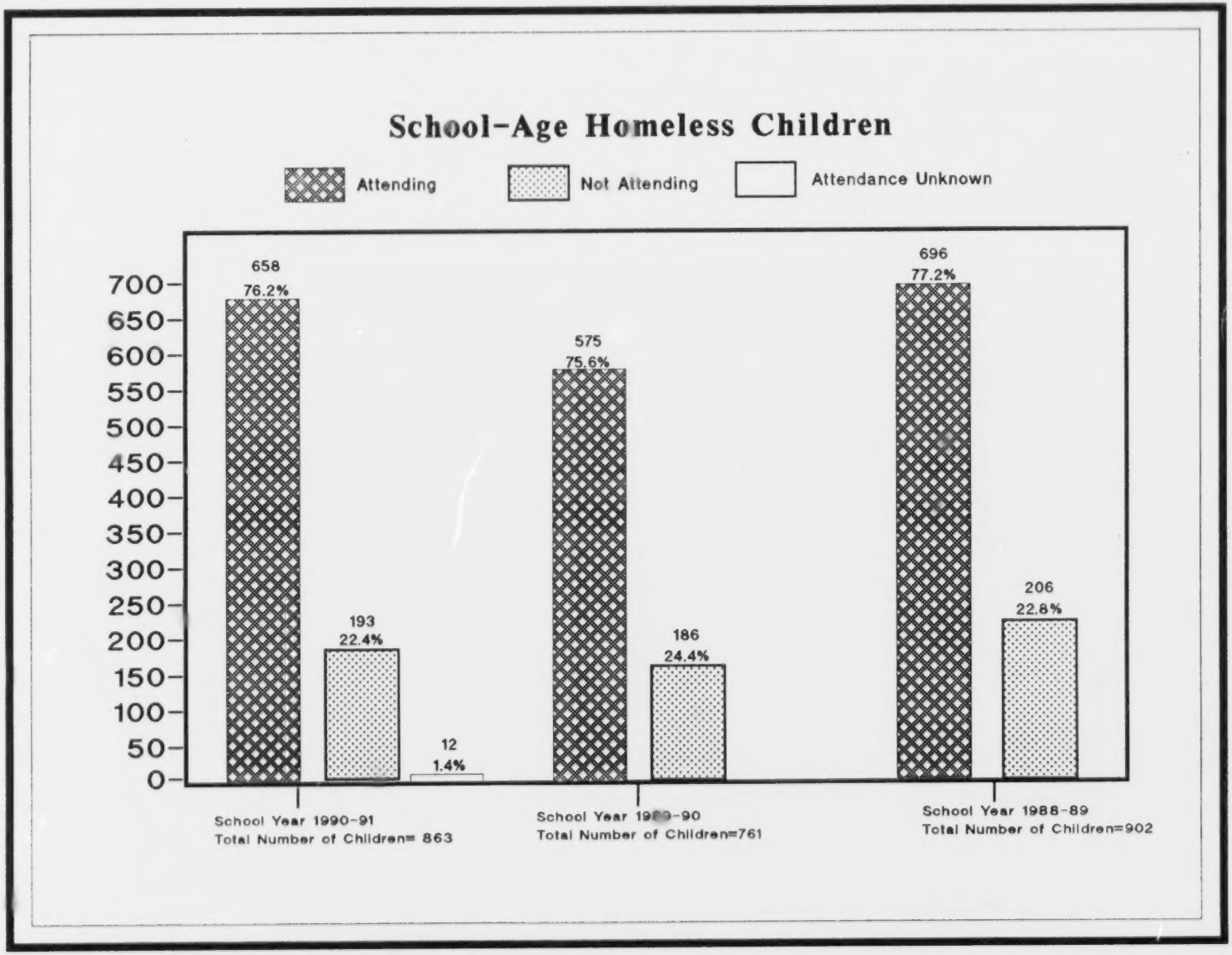


Homeless Children in Maryland

School Attendance by Grade



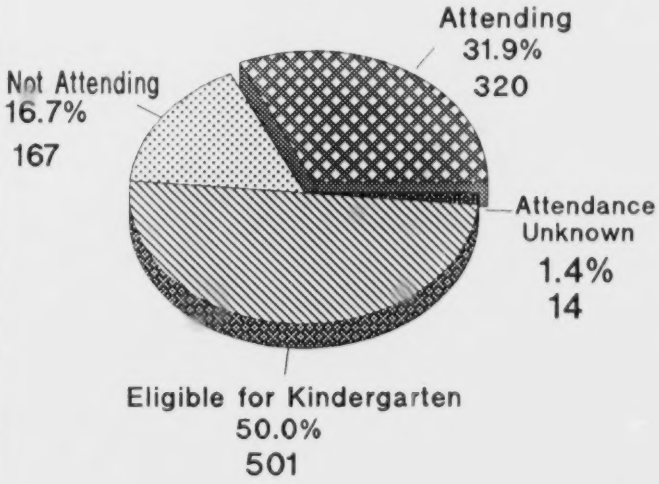
Battered Spouse Shelters In Maryland



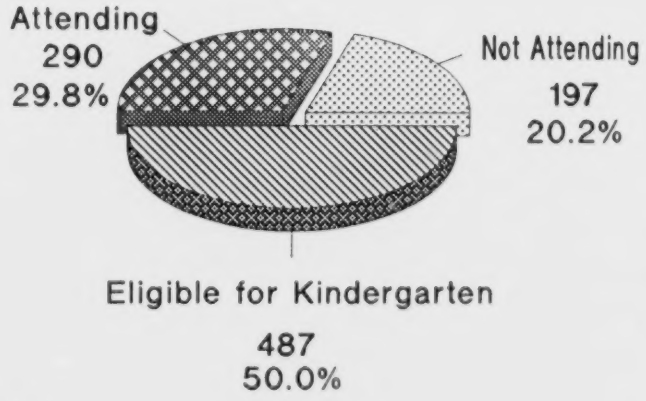
Homeless Children in Maryland

Five Year Olds

School Year 1990-91



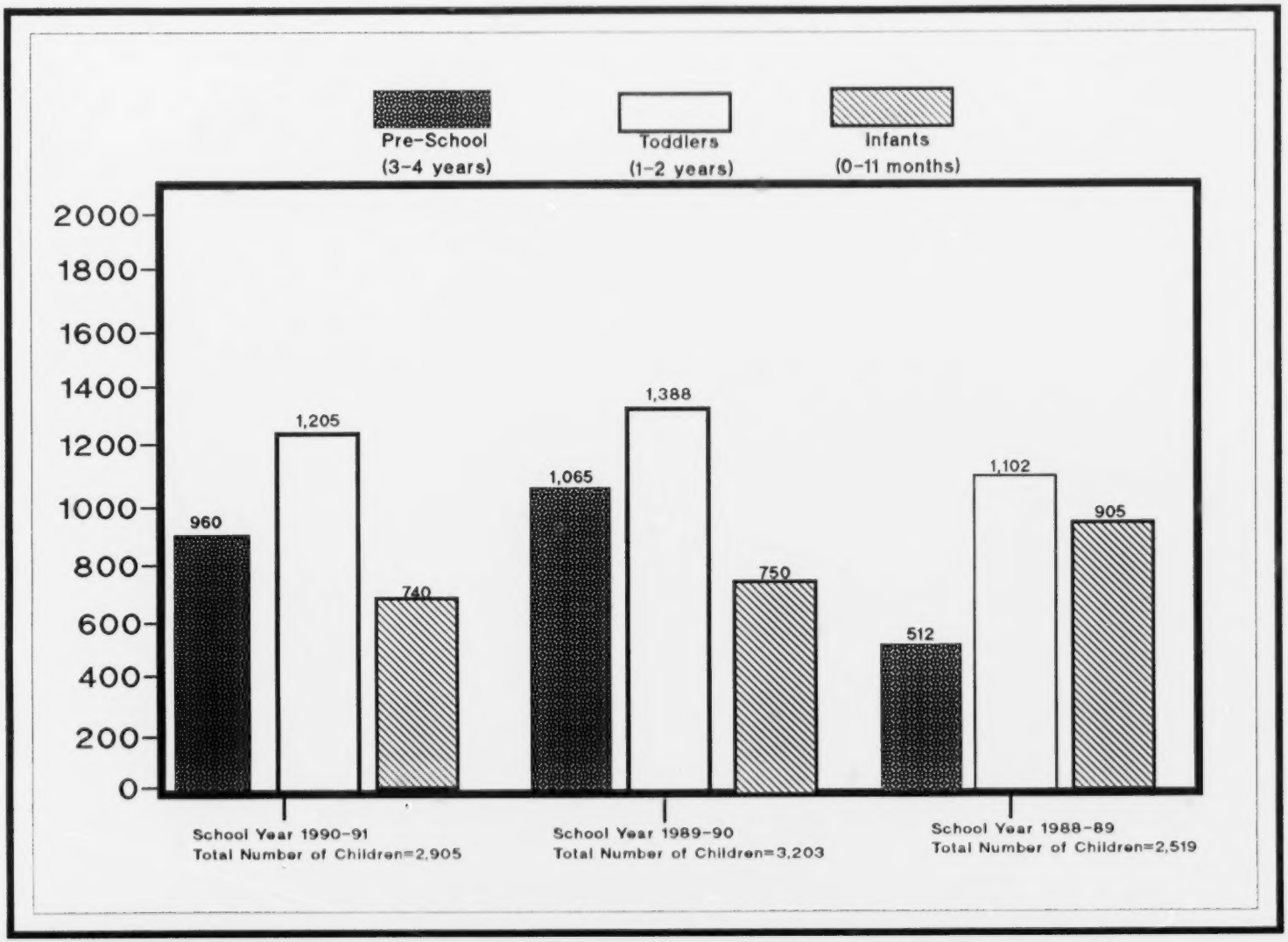
School Year 1989-90



The mandatory school age in Maryland is six years of age; however, beginning school year 1992-93, kindergarten will be mandatory. Our data indicates that many homeless parents do not register their five year olds for kindergarten or they withdraw the children once they become homeless due to inflexible scheduling of appointments and transportation problems.

Homeless Children In Maryland

Four Years of Age and Under



Legislative Update

1990 McKinney Act Amendments

A revised and expanded version of Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney Act was signed by President Bush on November 29, 1990. The reauthorizing statute is the McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments 1990 (P.L. 191-645). Congressional policy regarding Subtitle VII-B under the 1990 McKinney Act Amendments remained the same as in the 1987 McKinney Act, with two exceptions. First, Congress more clearly stated that no residency requirements, or other laws, regulations, practices, or policies, that may be part of compulsory education laws, may act as barriers to the enrollment, attendance, or success of homeless children and youth in school. Second, Congress explicitly stated that homelessness alone should not be sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment.

> Section 723 Local Educational Agency Grants for the Eduction of Homeless Children and Youth

This section of the Act provides for financial assistance to local school districts to provide direct services to homeless children and youth to ensure their success in school. When states provide grants to local school districts, no less than 50 percent of the grant must be allocated for tutoring, remedial education services, or other education services to homeless children and youth. In addition, at least 35 percent but no more than 50 percent of the grant may be used for a variety of related activities to enhance access to educational services. A few examples of these activities include:

- expedited evaluations of strengths and needs of homeless children and youth;
- professional development for school personnel on the needs and rights of homeless children and youth;
- referral services to homeless children and youth for medical, dental, mental, and other health services; and
- before and after school and summer programs for homeless children and youth in which a teacher or other qualified individual provides tutoring, homework assistance, and supervision of education activities.

The law further requires that each local school district receiving a grant must designate a homeless liaison to coordinate all activities related to the education of homeless children and youth in the local jurisdiction.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

School District Obligations To Identify and Locate Homeless Children and Youth Who Are Handicapped.

In addition to the provisions set out in the McKinney Act, school districts are obligated under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to identify and locate all homeless children who are handicapped. Unlike the McKinney Act, which is a program funding statute, Section 504 is a broad civil rights statutes that protects the rights of individuals with handicaps in programs and activities that receive Federal monies. Section 504 provides that: **"NO OTHERWISE QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL WITH HANDICAPS IN THE UNITED STATES .... SHALL, SOLELY BY REASON OF HER OR HIS HANDICAP, BE EXCLUDED FROM PARTICIPATION IN, BE DENIED THE BENEFITS OF, OR BE SUBJECTED TO DISCRIMINATION UNDER ANY PROGRAM OR ACTIVITY RECEIVING FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE."**

Subpart D of Section 504 specifies that school districts annually: **TAKE STEPS TO IDENTIFY AND LOCATE EVERY QUALIFIED HANDICAPPED PERSON RESIDING IN THEIR JURISDICTION WHO IS NOT RECEIVING A PUBLIC EDUCATION; AND TAKE APPROPRIATE AND CONTINUING STEPS TO NOTIFY HANDICAPPED PERSONS AND THEIR PARENTS OR GUARDIANS OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS' OBLIGATIONS TO PROVIDE A FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION TO QUALIFIED HANDICAPPED PERSONS.**

According to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, the initial step in providing educational services for those children and youth who are handicapped is to locate and identify the individuals in need of specialized services. While homeless children and youth should not be automatically identified as handicapped solely because of their homelessness, school personnel should be sensitive to the fact that informed shelter providers and homeless parents can be helpful in identifying homeless children with handicapping conditions.

Section 504 does not prescribe methods for identifying children with handicaps or for notifying them of their right to free appropriate public education; however, the following recommendations may assist school personnel in identifying and locating homeless families with children who are handicapped:

- Contact and collaborate with the State Coordinator of Education for Homeless Children and Youth.
- Consult with local shelters, advocacy groups, health and social service agencies, religious groups, and other private organizations that provide services to homeless families with children.
- Publicize notices regarding the rights of handicapped children in places that are frequented by homeless children and youth and their parents.

Chapter I Policy: Eligibility of Homeless Children

Under section 722(e)(5) of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, a state receiving funds under that Act is required to submit a State plan that includes a provision to ensure that "each homeless child shall be provided services comparable to services offered other students in the school... including educational services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria, such as compensatory educational programs for the disadvantaged...." Therefore, because homeless children, by definition, do not have a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence, educationally deprived homeless children attending schools that have Chapter I projects are eligible for participation provided they meet the same educational criteria as other children in the school. In addition, homeless children (those identifiable under the McKinney Act) attending non-Chapter I schools may be served under Chapter I. These children, by definition, cannot meet the eligibility requirement that they reside in a project area and would, in effect, be precluded from receiving Chapter I services. To ensure that homeless children, who may be among the most needy, are not denied services because of an eligibility requirement they cannot meet, LEAs may serve educationally deprived homeless children without regard to the residency requirement.

Mandatory Kindergarten-Minimum Age

IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATIONS OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, A CHILD WHO RESIDES IN THIS STATE AND IS 5 YEARS OLD MAY BE EXEMPTED FROM MANDATORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE FOR 1 YEAR IF THE CHILD'S PARENT OR GUARDIAN FILES A WRITTEN REQUEST WITH THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM ASKING THAT THE CHILD'S ATTENDANCE BE DELAYED DUE TO THE CHILD'S LEVEL OF MATURITY.

EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (F) OF THIS SECTION OR IN REGULATIONS OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, EACH CHILD WHO RESIDES IN THIS STATE SHALL ATTEND A KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM REGULARLY DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR PRIOR TO ENTERING THE FIRST GRADE UNLESS THE CHILD IS OTHERWISE RECEIVING REGULAR, THOROUGH INSTRUCTION IN THE SKILLS AND STUDIES USUALLY TAUGHT IN A KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM OF A PUBLIC SCHOOL.

The mandatory kindergarten requirement becomes effective school year 1992-93. Current data indicate that many homeless parents do not register their five-year-olds for kindergarten or they withdraw the children once they become homeless. It is very difficult for a homeless parent to keep scheduled appointments, to look for housing and employment, and to pick up a five-year-old who is enrolled in the school's half-day kindergarten program. In an effort to ensure that the half-day kindergarten programs are not a barrier to homeless families, state and local task forces and advisory committees for the education of homeless children and youth are encouraged to begin exploring ways of coordinating efforts and providing alternatives for homeless five-year- olds who may otherwise not attend.

School Health Services Standards: Physical Examination Requirement

The physical examination requirement begins school year 1991-92; however, it will not be a barrier to enrolling a homeless student in Maryland's public schools. Homeless children who are entering the Maryland Public School System for the first time and who have not had a physical examination or can not show proof of having a physical examination will not be denied access to any school in Maryland. The physical examination requirement was established in an effort to ensure the well being of all our children. Therefore, homeless parents should seek the assistance of shelter staff and/or the school nurse to locate available resources for obtaining a physical examination for their school-age children.

COMAR 13A.05.05.05--.15

(1) **A physical examination shall be required of each child entering the Maryland Public School System for the first time. The examination must be completed within the period of nine months prior to entrance or six months after entrance. The physical examination form designated by the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene shall be used to meet this requirement.**

(2) **The physical examination shall be completed by a physician or certified nurse practitioner.**

(3) **For each school year each public school shall report to the local board or local health department the number of children entering the public school system for the first time who have not had a physical examination because of the lack of access to health care; insufficient financial resources; or any other reason, including a religious reason, as the public school deems appropriate.**

(4) **An effort should be made to facilitate students and their families in obtaining a physical examination. However, if the student is unable to obtain a physical examination, the student shall not be excluded from school.**

(5) **For each school year the local board or local health department shall report the number of children who have not had a physical examination and the reason(s) for not obtaining the physical examination to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.**

Exemplary Practices

Students Helping Students Initiatives

Two hundred students from schools in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's and Baltimore counties were invited to attend a student conference that focused on heightening their awareness about homelessness and its impact on homeless families. The teams of four students (second through fifth grade) and one adult sponsor attended workshops and accepted the charge to return to their schools as student ambassadors. The student ambassadors, working as a team, were to share the information and materials received at the conference with other students in the school and to begin planning and implementing a student initiative. The student initiative was an activity planned and implemented by students to help homeless children within their communities.

The Students Helping Students Initiatives provided an opportunity for schools and shelters to work together and for parents, teachers, and students to learn more about homelessness. The success of each initiative listed below was dependent upon the total commitment from everyone involved.

Baltimore City

School: **Malcolm X Primary School (Pre-K thru 2nd)**
Principal: **Myrtle Washington Telephone Number: 396-0546**
Feeder Shelter: **Springhill Transitional Program**
Student Initiative: **Calling All Pennies**

The second grade student ambassadors at Malcolm X Primary School met with the shelter director to determine the needs of the children residing at Springhill Transitional Program. As a result of the meeting, the team decided to sponsor a School Days Drive to collect school supplies for the school age children and to ask their classmates and teachers to bring in pennies to feed Malcolm the Jug. Malcolm was a large water cooler jug that was decorated and now holds "Pennies for Our Friends." To launch the schoolwide project, the team of second graders organized a schoolwide pep rally and talked to fellow classmates. The theme for the student initiative activities was "That's What Friends Are For." The collection drives provided $305.00 in pennies which were presented to the shelter director for the purpose of purchasing items for the children at Springhill.

School: **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School**
Principal: **Mrs. Colyn H. Harrington Telephone Number: 396-0756**
Feeder Shelter: **Springhill Transitional Program**
Student Initiative: **Learning Center**

The fourth and fifth grade student ambassadors at Dr. Martin Luther King Elementary School took a different approach to meeting a special need of the children at Springhill Transitional Program. The student ambassadors, with the assistance of their adult

sponsors, created a Learning Center at the shelter to be used by the parents and children. The students, parents, and staff at the school donated books, reference materials, and magazines. In addition, they decorated the Learning Center and created cozy corners for reading and quiet areas for studying and doing homework.

School: **Samuel Coleridge Taylor Elementary School**
Principal: **Deborah Wortham Telephone Number: 396-0784**
Feeder Shelter: **YWCA Corner House Shelter**
Student Initiative: **Caring and Sharing Initiatives**

The fifth grade student ambassadors from the Sensational Samuel Coleridge Taylor Elementary School found that the children residing at the YWCA Corner House Shelter had many needs. The team was so motivated to help that they planned a schedule of activities to be implemented during selected months throughout the 1990-91 and 1991-92 school years.

Sensational Sam Student's Caring and Sharing Initiatives included:

- Taped music, songs, and messages to our friends at the shelter.
- An "Everybody's Birthday" party (students asked to bring a wrapped gift to school that can be taken to the shelter so that all the children there can receive a gift/card).
- Slide presentation about the school that will be shared with children at the shelter who will be entering the school for the first time.
- A "Soup Kitchen Day" (shelter director will be asked to give names of 10-15 shelter friends to invite to a luncheon prepared and served by students and parents at school).
- "March for the Homeless" to raise the awareness of the community.
- Dessert Free Day: students and staff will donate their cookie and dessert money for that day to the homeless initiative to purchase needed items for families living in shelters.
- Share An Item Drive: students and staff will bring in selected items to share with our friends living in the YWCA shelter.

School: **Harford Heights Elementary School**
Principal: **Clifton Ball Telephone Number: 396-9342**
Feeder Shelter: **Rutland Transitional Program**
Student Initiative: **Sweets For Our Sweeties**

The third, fourth, and fifth grade student ambassadors from Harford Heights Elementary School organized a bake sale to raise monies to expand the book selection at the Rutland Center Library. Parents, grandparents, students, and teachers, donated the

"sweets for our sweeties". The students raised $275.80. The money was used to purchase books, coloring books, records, puzzles, and video tapes. The students even included a magazine subscription to the children's favorite magazine, Highlights.

Anne Arundel County

School: **Freetown Elementary School**
Principal: **Charlene Pryseski Telephone Number: 761-2544**
Feeder Shelter: **YWCA Women's Center**
Student Initiative: **School Supplies for the Homeless**

The enthusiastic fifth grade student ambassadors from Freetown Elementary School planned and implemented a school-wide School Supply Drive. Freetown Elementary is the feeder school for the YWCA Women's Center, a domestic violence shelter. Due to the confidentiality of the residents and guarded secret about the shelter's exact location, the student ambassadors could not visit the shelter. Therefore, the team decided to collect school supplies and have a Welcome Packet ready for the children when they register. The school secretary was asked to handle this important task and to greet the families warmly. The student ambassadors conducted the following activities in preparation for the drive:

- Presentations were made to their respective fifth grade classes to inform other students of the conference they attended and to solicit help in the various activities. Each student planner served as chairperson of a subcommittee.

- The student planners and committee members decorated a collection box for the supplies.

- The student planners and committee members designed and displayed posters announcing the drive.

- The student planners and committee members wrote announcements for use over the public address system.

- The student planners read the announcements over the P.A. System during morning announcements.

- One of the student planners practiced and read a book about a homeless puppy, Claude the Dog by Dick Gachienback, to first graders and asked for their help in the supply drive.

- The student planners collected and organized the school supplies on a daily basis.

School: **Rolling Knoll Elementary School**
Principal: **Raymond L. Herbert** **Telephone Number: 224-2170**
Feeder Shelter: **Helping Hand**
Student Initiative: **Chip In For The Homeless**

Rolling Knoll Elementary School's fifth grade student ambassadors planned and implemented two activities to help the homeless children residing at the Helping Hand Shelter. The activities were a School Supply Drive for grades 1-3 and a Book Drive for grades 4-5. The students constructed bulletin boards in the main hallway to announce each activity. It was titled "Chip In For: The School Supply Drive For The Homeless" and "Chip In For: The Book Drive For The Homeless." In addition to the bulletin board displays, the team visited classrooms to explain to their classmates what the word "homeless" meant. For a week, children in grades 1-3 at Rolling Knoll brought in rulers, pencils, crayons, notebooks, folders, scissors and glue and they discussed homelessness and its impact on families - particularly children. The children in grades 4 and 5 participated in the Book Drive activity by bringing in new, old, and good condition books that would benefit all the residents at the Helping Hand Shelter.

Howard County

School: **Hammond Elementary School**
Principal: **John Morningstar** **Telephone Number: 725-1923**

School: **Bushy Park Elementary School**
Principal: **David MacPherson** **Telephone Number: 313-5500**

School: **Waterloo Elementary School**
Principal: **Madrainne Johnson** **Telephone Number: 313-5014**

School: **Stevens Forest Elementary School**
Principal: **Earl Slacum** **Telephone Number: 313-6900**

School: **Longfellow Elementary School**
Principal: **Marianne Pfeiffer** **Telephone Number: 313-6879**

School: **West Friendship Elementary School**
Principal: **Leah Farmer** **Telephone Number: 313-5512**

Student Initiative: Students Helping Students' Video

The third through fifth grade student ambassadors from Hammond, Bushy Park, Waterloo, Stevens Forest, Longfellow, and West Friendship Elementary Schools decided to pool their resources and talents to develop a video that provides a guide for students on how to help the homeless. The video shows the many activities that were planned and implemented at each school. The activities explained in the video included:

- Fundraisers - ranging from clothing drives to collecting money to meet a specific need at CASA and Grassroots Shelters.

- Lobbing and Working with the News Media to Promote Public Awareness (including letters to delegates and senators)

- Public Awareness Presentations to teachers and students

- Distribution of student-made materials to members of the community to heighten their awareness and sensitivity to the needs of homeless families in Howard County.

School: **Deep Run Elementary School**
Principal: **Dr. James Pope** **Telephone Number: 313-5000**
Student Initiative: **Famous Favorites Cookbook and Campaign for the Children**

The fourth and fifth grade student ambassadors at Deep Run Elementary School planned and implemented two initiatives to help homeless families and the children residing at Grassroots Shelter. The student initiatives were Famous Favorites Cookbook, a year long project, and Campaign for the Children, a short-term project. The Famous Favorites Cookbook initiative involved writing letters to "famous people" and the school staff for their favorite recipes. The students are planning to compile all the recipes into a Famous Favorites Cookbook. The cookbook will be sold throughout the community, with a special dedication to the families at Grassroots Shelter and the proceeds will be donated to the shelter. The second initiative, Campaign for the Children, involved collecting school supplies, toiletry items, small stuffed animals, and books for the homeless children and their families. The collection drive was implemented for one month.

School: **St. John's Lane Elementary School**
Principal: **Yvonne Harrison** **Telephone Number: 313-2813**
Student Initiative: **Kids Making A Difference For Kids**

The fourth grade talent pool students at St. John's Lane Elementary School provided public awareness and planned and implemented some exciting schoolwide initiatives that will benefit homeless children and their families in the Howard County community. The 15 student ambassadors conducted interviews, researched the subject of homelessness, viewed the video, "Shelter Boy," and visited Grassroots Shelter prior to planning the following initiatives:

- Beginning "Pen Pals" with Grassroots Crisis Intervention in Howard County. Children of 3rd and 4th grade level will be invited to send letters to the children living in the shelter. Only the first name, age and sex of the child will be provided.
- Involvement in "Special Friends Program" with Grassroots. We will volunteer one hour, twice weekly, in two different groups to lead special activities for the children at the shelter.
- Beginning a business partnership with local businesses to arrange for special

donations to homeless shelters. This will require correspondence with local shelters to determine special needs. (We have begun this for several.) For some items, a special donation drive can be conducted from the community.

- Conducting inservice awareness sessions for the faculty of the school and the PTA to share what has been learned and what future goals we have and how they can help us attain them.
- Create a video with an original screenplay highlighting positive attitudes in working with homeless students and shelters. Plot idea centers around "Prince and Pauper" theme where two children by circumstance are forced to switch places and learn a valuable lesson.

Prince George's County

School: **Langley Park/McCormick Elementary School**
Principal: **Dr. Patricia Kelly Telephone Number: 445-0515**
Feeder Shelter: **Emergency Family Shelter**
Student Initiative: **We Make SMILES**

The second, third, and fourth grade student ambassadors at Langley Park/McCormick Elementary School visited their feeder shelter and decided to implement the following activities that involved participation from everyone in the school:

- Artwork to help beautify the walls of the public rooms.
- Bound and laminated books containing original stories and pictures for use by the children at the shelter while waiting for their parents who attend classes in parenting, job hunting skills, and checkbook management.
- Birthday cards and birthday boxes filled with favors, small gifts, books, candy, etc. for children who have birthdays while living at the shelter and attending our school.

In addition to these activities, the student ambassadors were joined by representatives of the student council as they planned and implemented the following activities to heighten the awareness of students and staff:

- Viewing of "Shelter Boy" by faculty and a report about the Student Initiative concept given by the sponsor ("Shelter Boy" was also made available to teachers for viewing by their classes).
- Morning announcements, made by students, focused on information provided at the conference and information obtained after visiting the feeder shelter.

School: Seat Pleasant Elementary School
Principal: Julia H. Wright **Telephone Number:** 925-8770
Feeder Shelter: Shepard's Cove
Student Initiative: Seat Pleasant Easter Hunt and Party

The fourth, fifth, and sixth grade student ambassadors met with the shelter director and teachers from Seat Pleasant who regularly volunteer their time at the shelter to discuss the needs of the families and children. They decided to combine the Easter Holiday with the needs of the homeless children residing at Shepard's Cove.

The first grade made Easter cards. The third grade made signs to brighten the shelter and the sixth grade decorated the baskets, which were shoeboxes. The boxes were filled with items bought with money made at a schoolwide bake sale. They raised $91.00 to buy supplies. The supplies included soap, washcloths, toothbrushes, toothpaste, jellybeans, coloring books, crayons, pens, pencils and word search books. In addition to these items, combs, punch, toys and candy were donated for the baskets. Representatives from the school took the baskets to the shelter for an Easter egg hunt and party. The children enjoyed the party. The initiative was so well received that the students and staff at Seat Pleasant Elementary School plan to make this an annual event.

Baltimore County

School: Lansdowne Elementary School
Principal: Carl T. Bochau **Telephone Number:** 887-1408
Feeder Shelter: Hearth House
Student Initiative: Helping Hearts and Hands

Lansdowne Elementary School's fourth and fifth grade student ambassadors have been very busy planning and implementing a series of activities that will help meet the needs of families residing at Hearth House. First, the students met with the shelter director to discuss the needs at the shelter and activities that the students at Lansdowne could plan and implement. Next, the students decided on a theme and created a logo. The logo and theme, Helping Hearts and Hands, was displayed throughout the school.

The student ambassadors planned a series of activities that would be implemented throughout the school year. Therefore, school and community volunteers were solicited for each activity. The Helping Hearts and Hands activities included the following:

- Project Holiday: Easter baskets made for all the residents at Hearth House; Mother's Day crafts made with the children; small gifts to recognize birthdays.
- Project Play: Students visit shelter for one hour every Tuesday to read to the children and to provide games and recreational activities.
- Project Landscape: Students and families from the community donate time and talents to regularly clean up the yard at Hearth House.

- Project Prepared: Faculty and Students collect and store school supplies for incoming children from Hearth House.

- Project Welcome: Homeless children attending Lansdowne Elementary will receive a "We're So Glad You're Here" welcome packet. The packet will contain school supplies, information about the school, procedures, extra-curricular activities etc. In addition to the welcome packets, each child is assigned a "best buddy."

School: **Halethorpe Elementary School**
Principal: **Donald C. Gourley Telephone Number: 887-1406**
Feeder Shelter: **Arbutus Shelter**
Student Initiative: **Have A Heart - Help the Homeless**

The fourth and fifth grade student ambassadors at Halethorpe Elementary School eagerly shared the information provided at the conference with parents, teachers, and students, through discussions, displays, announcements, and a variety of activities. The students planned and implemented the following monthly activities:

September: "Pennies for the Homeless"-- students bring in pennies to provide back packs and school supplies for homeless students.

October: "Winter Warm Ups" provides mittens for children

December: "Sock It to Me" provides socks for shelter residents.

January-February: "All Wrapped Up for Winter" provides robes for shelter residents.

March-April: "Feed the Future" money is collected to provide baby formulas for the infants and toddlers in the shelters.

May-June: "Up Close and Personal"-- school staff provides personal items such as toothpaste, shampoo, brushes etc., for shelter residents.

At the beginning of the school year, each grade will select the theme and month for their participation. Classes will be responsible for providing the items indicated for that month and monthly visits will be made to our feeder shelter to take the items collected.

School: **Dundalk Elementary School**
Principal: **Beverly Norwood Telephone Number: 887-7013**
Feeder Shelter: **Family Crisis Center**
Student Initiative: **Helping Hands for the Homeless**

The three third, fourth, and fifth grade student ambassadors met with the director from Family Crisis Center and their sponsors to plan the following activities:

- Provide books for library for children at the Family Crisis Center
- Collect toiletry items for shelter residents
- Organize clothes at "Project Coveralls"

The students advertised and coordinated all the activities for the Books and Toiletries Collection Drives. In addition, students signed up to volunteer to organize clothes at a local church where "Project Coveralls" is housed. Project Coveralls provides clothes to needy families.

School: **Reisterstown Elementary School**
Principal: **Dena S. Love** **Telephone: 887-1133**
Feeder Shelter: **YWCA Corner House - Reisterstown Shelter**
Student Initiative: **Books for Others**

The fourth grade student ambassadors at Reisterstown Elementary School organized a book drive for the children living at the Reistertown Shelter. This student initiative was adopted as a fourth grade project. Two fourth grade classes made big books on poetry and black history and organized a collection drive so that classmates could donate books for children of all ages. Students from both classes decorated boxes to store the books. The books were placed in the shelter's playroom.

School: **Franklin High School**
Principal: **Kenneth Flikinger** **Telephone Number: 887-1119**
Feeder Shelter: **YWCA Corner House - Reisterstown Shelter**
Student Initiative: **The Corner House Project**

The class of 1992 has adopted The YWCA Corner House Shelter and students from the class visit the shelter regularly to help implement the following activities throughout the school year:

- School Supply and Toiletry Drives
- Monthly Everybody's Birthday Party
- Tutoring and Reading Sessions
- Organized Play Sessions

Class leaders organize the activities sponsored by the class of 1992 and everyone in the class is encouraged to visit the shelter and volunteer for the planning and/or implementation of the activities.

School: **Relay Elementary School**
Principal: **William A. Beckwith** **Telephone Number: 887-1426**
Feeder Shelter: **YWCA Corner House - Arbutus Shelter**
Student Initiative: **Welcome Students and Friends**

The fourth and fifth grade student ambassadors, school nurse, teacher, pupil personnel worker, and a parent representative visited the feeder shelter to discuss with the shelter director the needs of the children residing at the YWCA Corner House Shelter. Following the visit, the student ambassadors organized two teams. One team planned activities to heighten the awareness of teachers, parents, and the children at Relay. The second team developed and produced a video that welcomes new students to Relay Elementary. The video, "Welcome Students and Friends", is narrated by the children and provides a sneak preview of how "neat' it is to be a student at Relay Elementary. A copy of the video was given to the shelter director and pupil personnel worker to share with school age children residing at the shelter. In addition to the activities, the students collected school supplies and made "Welcome Packets" for each new student.

Exemplary Practices

Local School District's Exemplary Practices

Each year, the Maryland State Department of Education sponsors a conference for educators, parents, providers, and advocates. The purpose of the conference is to heighten the awareness about the impact of homelessness on the lives of Maryland's homeless families and children, to encourage shelter - school partnerships, and to identify intervention strategies that address the special needs of homeless children and youth. A local school system that has demonstrated an exemplary practice in addressing the needs of its homeless children is invited to co-sponsor the conference with the Maryland State Department of Education. As co-sponsor, the local school system's exemplary practice is acknowledged through a display and a special award that is presented during the plenary activities of the conference. The following local school systems have been recipients of the Exemplary Practice Recognition Award.

Baltimore County Public Schools

Exemplary Practice: Assignment of Pupil Personnel Workers to transitional and emergency shelters and motels to facilitate the immediate enrollment of homeless students

Homeless families are very transient and very often the children will miss extended periods of time from school because the parent is unable to follow the procedures necessary to enroll the child in school. Perhaps, the stress of homelessness is so great that enrolling the child is not very high on the parent's list of priorities; or, both parent and child have apprehensions about transferring to yet another new school.

Baltimore County Public Schools has assigned pupil personnel workers to each of the emergency and transitional shelters and emergency motels where homeless families reside in the county. The role of the pupil personnel worker is to serve as a liaison between the shelters and schools and to assist homeless parents in the immediate enrollment of their children in school. When a homeless family enters the shelter or motel, the pupil personnel worker is notified the same day. The pupil personnel worker visits the family, makes all the arrangements for the child's enrollment in the school, assists parents with the completion of all forms, and meets with the child to discuss the new school. The pupil personnel workers coordinate the School Days Drive at the feeder schools each year; therefore, a Welcome Packet, filled with school supplies, is made available for each child.

Baltimore City Public Schools

Exemplary Practice: Commitment to provide transportation for homeless children back to their home schools.

Our statistics indicate that many homeless children change schools 5-6 different times within a school year. The instability of the homeless child's school situation makes it very difficult for teachers to provide continuity in the child's educational program and for the child to maintain peer relationships.

Baltimore City Public Schools has made the commitment to provide transportation for homeless children attending a school in Baltimore City to return to their home school (the school the child attended prior to becoming homeless). The home school, however, must be within the Baltimore City local jurisdiction.

If transportation is needed, the shelter director or parent notifies the Transportation Office and within 1-2 days, transportation is arranged for the child back to the home school. The children are transported using public transportation or taxi service to and from the shelter and school.

Exemplary Practices

LESSON PLAN: What Does It Mean To Be Homeless?

Teacher: Judith A. Cheek
School: Relay Elementary School
Local School District: Baltimore County

GRADE LEVEL

Third thru fifth grades

LESSON OBJECTIVE

- The participants will become more aware of the effects of homelessness on the lives of school children.

MATERIALS

- tagboard with the lesson's objective written on it
- doll house
- doll house furniture
- cardboard figures symbolizing 2 parents and 2 children, and a pet
- yellow squares and red squares made from tagboard
- masking tape
- bed sheet
- overhead projector
- transparencies and marking pens

STRATEGIES AND PROCEDURES

1. A student will be chosen to read the lesson's objective.

2. Students will use brainstorming as a technique to name as many kinds of homes/shelters as possible (e.g., row houses, tents, apartments, igloos).

3. Students will be presented with a cardboard family, doll house, and doll house furniture.

4. Students will be asked to list activities that occur in any given household.

5. The teacher will record student responses on an overhead transparency.

6. A bed sheet will suddenly be thrown over the doll house.

7. Students will be asked to look under their chairs to determine if they are now homeless (yellow squares) or not (red squares).

8. Students will be asked to offer possible causes for how they became homeless as well as how it feels to be homeless.

9. Students will then discuss how the life of a family is disrupted when the family becomes homeless.

10. Students will share ideas on what options are available to a family who suddenly finds itself homeless and how these might affect members of the family thru manipulation of doll house figures.

11. The teacher will then use transparencies to present the names of shelters and their corresponding feeder schools and information concerning their utilization.

12. Red square students will be asked how they might make the transition of any new student (including a student from a shelter) a bit easier.

13. The teacher will prompt students to summarize the main components of the lesson.

FOLLOW-UP

1. The following day, mature students could view the video "Shelter Boy" and discuss it. This video is available through the Maryland State Department of Education.

2. The teacher could locate appropriate short stories pertaining to feelings of loneliness or social isolation. He/she could then read these materials aloud to students. A class discussion could follow.

3. The guidance counselor could design an activity to reinforce concepts covered in today's lesson.

EVALUATION

1. Students will exhibit behaviors that demonstrate the acceptance of individual differences in general.

2. Students will exhibit behaviors that demonstrate their better understanding of people who are homeless.

LESSON PLAN: What Does It mean To Be Homeless?

Assistant Principal: Florence Wiggins
School: Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. Elementary School
Local School District: Baltimore City

GRADE LEVEL

Fourth thru sixth grades

GOAL

To create awareness of the effects of homelessness on the lives of school children

OBJECTIVE

Students will be able to answer the following questions about homelessness.

1. What does it mean to be homeless?
2. Who are our homeless?
3. Why do people become homeless?
4. Where do homeless people live?
5. What are the types of shelters?
6. What shelters are in our community?
7. How can we help homeless children and their families?

MATERIALS

* Video - "Shelter Boy"
* letter cards for the word "homelessness"
* chart paper
* markers
* dice
* game board, sectioned and numbered as shown

1 math	2 trivia	3 movie
4 lang.	5 science	6 music

PROCEDURES

A. Motivation - Play a board game. Call a child to throw a dice. When the dice lands, ask a question from the category that matches the "up" number on the dice. If the question is answered correctly, have the child turn over one letter card. Continue/repeat until all cards have been turned. Have the children read the word. (Homelessness)

B. Development -

1. Share the objective for the lesson (We will answer questions about homelessness).
2. Present each question, one at a time.
3. Record the children's responses on chart paper (brainstorming).
4. Review the responses, adding to them the facts on homelessness.
5. Show the video entitled "Shelter Boy".

SUMMARY/EVALUATION

Give several statements, one at a time, and have the children identify the question each statement answers.

LESSON PLAN: What Does It Mean To Be Homeless?

Master Teacher: Joan Coursey
School: Malcolm X Primary School
Local School District: Baltimore City

GRADE LEVEL

Primary Grades

OBJECTIVE

The students will be able to tell the effects of homelessness on the lives of school children.

MATERIALS

- Puppet (Seeme)
- VCR and video, "SHELTER BOY"
- Original poem: HOW WOULD YOU FEEL?
- Overhead projector and transparencies
- Red circles and blue squares
- Magic markers and story paper

MOTIVATION

Using the character of Seeme the Puppet, the children will listen to the plight of homeless children as Seeme reads the following poem:

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL?

How would you feel?
To live in a place
where Daddy can't stay.
To sleep on a bed one night
Then to move on the next day?

How would you feel?
To sit in a classroom
and stare at each new face...
Wondering if they will like me
Or call me names, in this place?

How would you feel?
To move every single day
In search of a new bed...
Or to sleep out in the street
When we are too late to be fed?

How would you feel?
To want to stay with Daddy,
And to walk the street all night...
And not to have a real bathroom
But knowing someday we'll be alright?

Discuss with the children how the poem made them feel and why.

PROCEDURES

- The children will view the video, SHELTER BOY, to understand that the family became homeless because of natural disaster.

- The children will be grouped according to the geometric symbol on the program, and they will discuss the reactions of the children in the video to the homeless boy's.

- Using transparencies, the teacher will display drawings that show how homeless families live and discuss with the children how each situation affects the child in the drawing.

  example: Picture of many families in a large crowded room and a child sitting on a cot trying to do homework.

- The teacher will show pictures of Springhill Transitional Housing and discuss the program offered at this shelter in the neighborhood of the Malcolm X Primary School.

- The children will return to their group format and brainstorm ways in which the students of Malcolm X School could reach out and share with the children at Springhill Housing.

The ideas were shared with the principal, and as a result, the whole school brought in pennies for our homeless friends. Two television stations and the Mayor visited the school to witness this sharing. The funds came to over three hundred dollars, and we presented the monies to the director of the Springhill Shelter during a special program. The monies were to be used to purchase items for the children at the shelter.

SUMMARY/EVALUATION

Ask each child to share one thing that he/she learned about homelessness.

CITY IN THE SKY

If there was a city in the sky
It would be a happy place
It would be filled
With all kinds of people
With toys for me to play with
With books for me to read.
People would be dancing
All of the time
And everyone would have a home.

chorus: With love we'll bring the city down
Onto earth's humble ground
Joining hearts and hands and hopes
We'll spread joy all around.

If there was a city in the sky
There would be enough
Food to feed everyone
There'd be books
Where stories came alive
There'd be jobs for everyone,
There'd be enough money to survive.

chorus If there was a city in the sky
There'd be peace for everyone
And the city would spread love
Like a golden sun.

Song created by the children at the Students Helping Students Conference with the assistance of Susan Yaruta, poet, and Teresa Whitaker, musician.

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